

In The News | 13th January 2023 | Latest Facilities Management News

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Welcome to InTheNews – covering all the FM news you may have missed over the week:

Property protection, security and management companies are sought for a new £135 million framework to support building safety and compliance for public sector organisations.

The ASC1 (Asset Safety and Compliance) Framework from public sector construction framework provider LHC is now open for contractors and consultants to register interest and attend webinars to find out more. Applications will be open later in January 2023. It includes provision for asbestos management; water testing, treatment, and management; heating, ventilation, and air conditioning-related services; and electrical testing and relevant support.

Dean Fazackerley, Head of Technical Procurement at LHC, said: “This framework arrives as a direct result of feedback from public sector organisations – including housing associations, local authorities, schools and healthcare settings – looking to improve their access to a pool of compliance-related expertise and encourage more collaboration across the marketplace.”

A new energy scheme for businesses, charities, and the public sector has been confirmed, ahead of the current scheme ending in March. The new scheme will mean all eligible UK businesses and other non-domestic energy users will receive a discount on high energy bills until 31 March 2024.

This will help businesses locked into contracts signed before recent substantial falls in the wholesale price manage their costs and provide others with reassurance against the risk of prices rising again.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Jeremy Hunt, said: "Even though prices are falling, I am concerned this is not being passed on to businesses, so I've written to Ofgem asking for an update on whether further action is action is needed to make sure the market is working for businesses."

Kier has launched a new digital apprenticeship, providing colleagues across the Group with vital data skills. This has launched in partnership with Multiverse, specialists at delivering data skills training.

The 13-month course will cover core technical skills required to transform data into insights and how to build narratives and present findings.

Apprentices will undertake on-the-job learning and benefit from one-to-one coaching with industry experts; they will also be supported by a thriving community with events, social and mentoring. Upon completion of the course, apprentices will gain a Level 3 qualification.

Louisa Finlay, client and markets director leading on Kier's digital strategy, said: "We continue to see huge growth in the role of data across a lot of areas in our lives. It's important that we invest in our people and provide them with skills, a deeper knowledge and technical ability that will benefit them for years to come."

And finally, Wolseley has warned that UK commercial property landlords face a race against time to comply with new heating emissions regulations that take effect this spring.

The Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES), first implemented in 2018, mandate that landlords granting a new lease for commercial premises must hold an energy performance certificate (EPC) with a rating of E or above.

Commercial properties with an EPC rating of F or G are considered sub-standard, and a deadline of 1 April this year has been set for landlords to make all possible cost-effective energy efficiency improvements or be ruled unlawful.

John Hancock, Chief Operating Officer, Wolseley, said: "These new standards have been on the horizon for several years, but the extreme disruption caused by COVID-19 and shifts in the commercial property sector have been a huge distraction, and landlords now face a scramble to upgrade premises and get certified."

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